



Branding, Marketing and Communications

Advancing Higher Education Through Insight and Innovation

A college or university's image is one of its most important assets - and among its least understood. Image is formed by what an institution says about itself in print, digital, electronic, and interpersonal media, internally and externally, and how well it communicates those messages to the right audiences at the right time.

WORDS AND DEEDS

Image is also formed by what an institution actually does or chooses not to do and how those behaviors align with its messaging. It is this ever-shifting constellation of words and deeds - behaviors, expectations, messages, media, and symbols - that constitute an institutional brand.

That is why brands are so much more than logos, slogans or color palettes. Rather, through an intentional, well-managed strategy, great brands evolve into widely recognized carriers of positive expectations and promises held by an institution's audiences and influencers.

Brands work across cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions. The best college and university brands should help an institution's constituents *think* something positive, *feel* something positive, and ultimately *do* something positive, such as choosing to apply, enroll or make a donation in the course of a meaningful lifelong relationship.

At Maguire Associates, we use research and analytic expertise; audience and influencer assessments; brand strategy and message development; marketing and communications

planning; and writing and other creative services to help clients understand themselves and their markets and communicate internally and externally with precision.

CREATING THE RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Excellence in branding, marketing, and communications often starts with research. Maguire Associates can help you:

- Conduct research among key audiences and influencers to assess perceptions of the institution and its offerings - especially as they relate to mission, vision, and values;
- Undertake research among current students, their parents, alumni, faculty, staff, employers, and opinion leaders on their perceptions of how well the institution delivers on its brand promises;
- Audit the institution's existing materials and media; and
- Test current messaging and proof points for accuracy and market response.

DEVELOPING BRAND STRATEGY

Building on this foundation, we then deliver:

- Research results and insights on the institution's image among key audiences and influencers;
- Brand promises that address the specific needs, desires and concerns of each audience segment;

- Comprehensive messaging systems with core messages defended by proof points in both factual and narrative form and applied to each type of audience and influencer;
- Brand strategy and architecture that can serve as a long-term roadmap for marketing and investment decisions;
- Recommendations on attributes that serve as the basis for a visual identity system that works well with the new messaging;
- Best practices in brand management that can be implemented by the brand stewards within the institution; and
- Training of an institution's management and communications teams on how to use the brand strategy and messaging in spoken and written form and across all media and materials.

Maguire Associates also works with clients to develop multiyear plans and associated institutional thought-leadership campaigns that deploy the brand strategy and messaging vigorously and rigorously.

We will help you craft an implementation program with specific actions, schedules, division-of-labor recommendations, choices of media and materials, budgets, and measurable outcomes.

OUTCOMES

Integrated, well-managed, and research-based branding, marketing and communications can help you:

- Build institutional awareness, especially at the top of the recruitment pipeline;
- Generate greater interest and demand among prospective students and parents;
- Target specific audiences and influencers with the right messages, materials, and media;
- Increase enrollment and retention;
- Improve funding and giving;
- Achieve greater pricing flexibility and lower discount rate;
- Inventory existing brands and their associated values, attributes, promises, strength, and potential;
- Align internal identity with external image; and
- Focus resources wisely.

